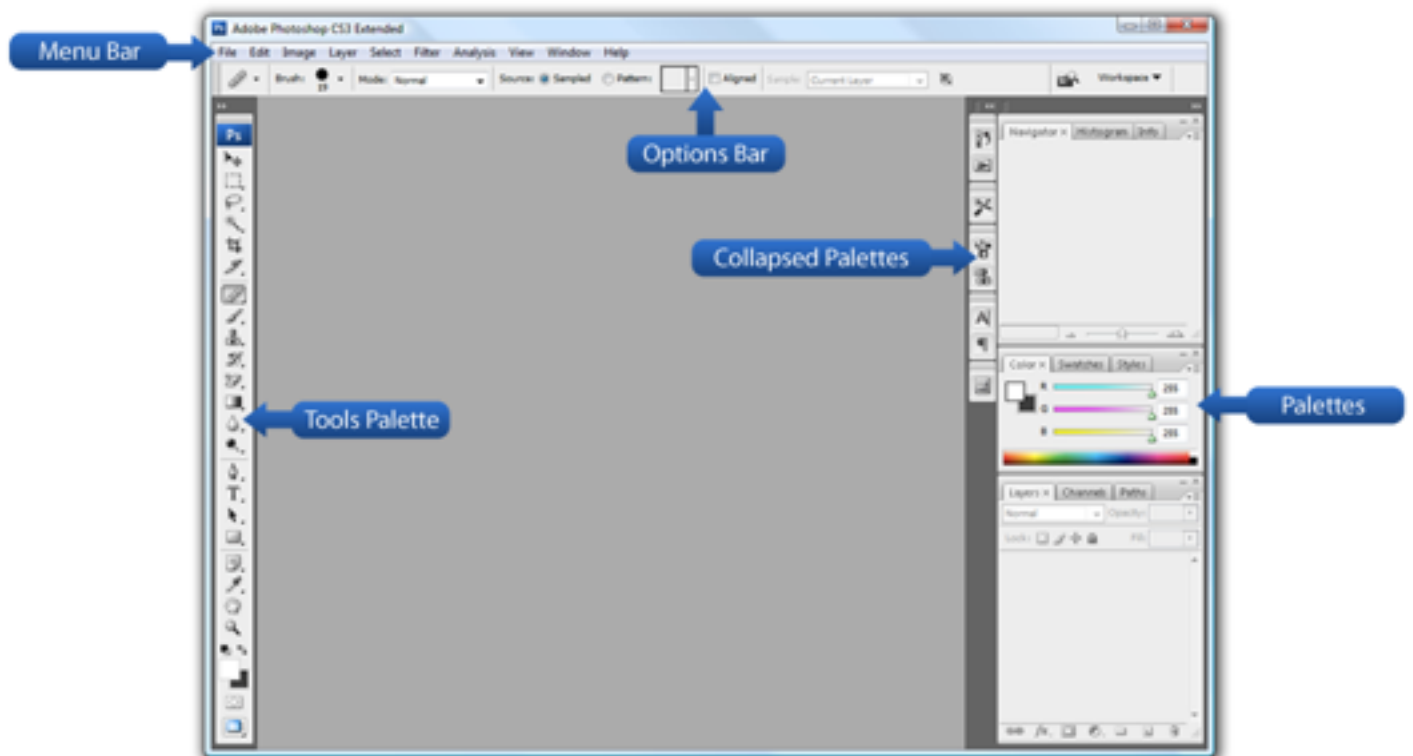


The image below is a screenshot of Photoshop's default workspace. There are seven key elements of the default workspace, keep in mind that you can change the workspace to better suit your needs. The first key element is the canvas (not labeled), the canvas is the editable white area where your artwork is displayed. The next thing you'll notice is the menu bar, these menus are where you'll find all the functionality of photoshop. To the left of the screen is the tools palette. As the name implies, the tools palette contains various tools found in Photoshop, as well as basic view and color controls.

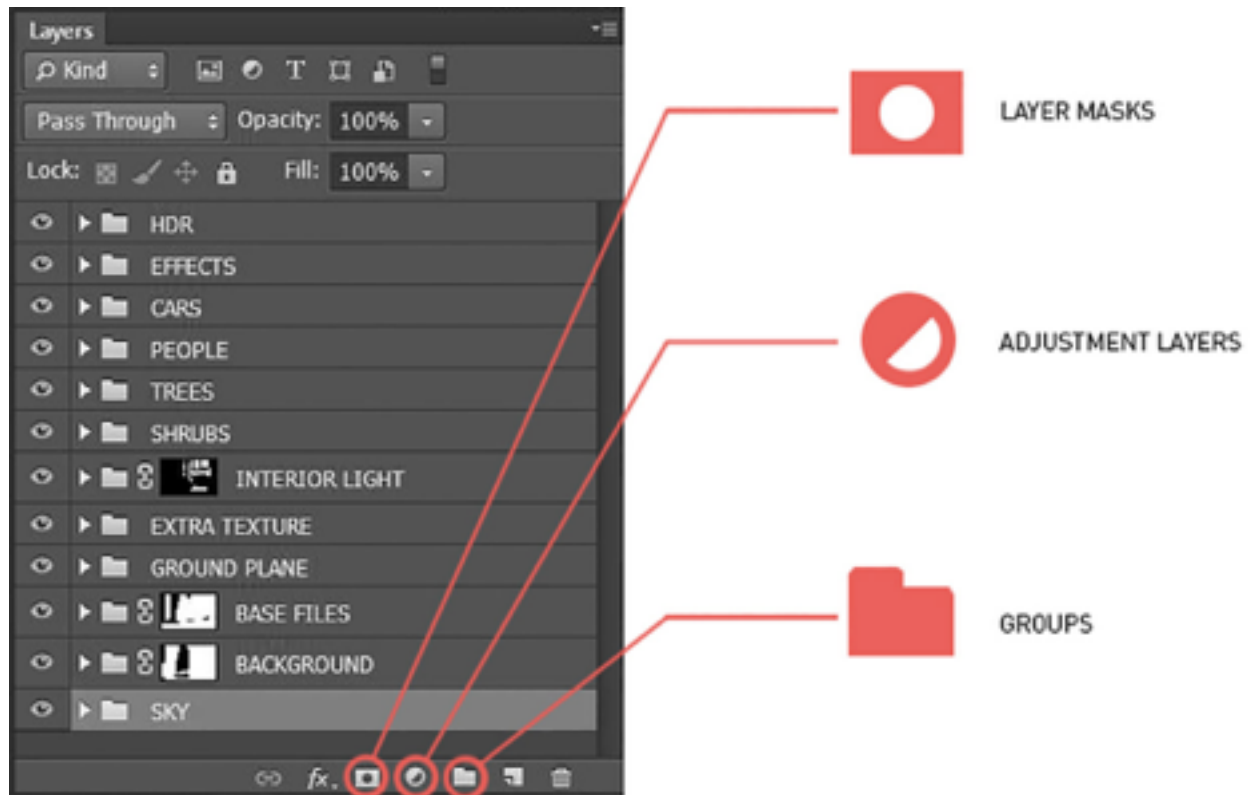
To the right of the screen is the navigator window, the navigator can be used to move around the canvas. In most cases, the navigator will not be needed. However, you might find use for it when working with especially large images. Below the navigator window is the color window, which can be used to quickly mix colors and get colors from swatches. Another key element in the workspace is the history window, this window is very helpful for undoing mistakes and keeping track of which edits you have performed. Lastly, you'll see the layers window, this is a critical part of the photoshop workspace, it helps you manage all the layers in your artwork.

## The Photoshop Workspace



One of the most important concepts in graphic software is the proper use and manipulation of layers. A layer can be thought of as an individual "slice" of an image that is sandwiched together. The major advantage of using layers is that you can easily manage and edit pieces of your artwork without disturbing the rest.

It is important to note that layers are not compatible with some image formats and the image will have to be flattened. Also note that layers will increase the file size and proper management will have to be performed to keep your files healthy and efficient.



One of the keys to a clean Photoshop file are groups. Groups are folders in the layers palette that contain one or more layers. Groups allow you to collapse many layers down to a single line allowing you to navigate between several hundred layers quickly. One more big advantage is that you can apply masks to groups which is useful for editing. A group can be created by clicking the folder icon at the bottom of the layers palette. Layers can then be dragged into the folder one at a time or several at a time.

Just like masks, adjustment layers are nondestructive and allow you to adjust things like levels, contrast, hue, etc. to several layers at once and also reverse the adjustment at any time later on down the road. Adjustment layers act like real layers allowing one to adjust the strength through opacity or even apply a mask to the adjustment. I don't use these too much but have found them really useful from time to time.